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ABSTRACT

An English committee read and evaluated 85 children's books and chose ten of them for the 1975 list of notable English-Canadian children's books. All forms of fiction and non-fiction were considered, and selection criteria included evaluation of the theme, setting, plot, characters, style, illustrations, and factual information. Entries are arranged in order by author, followed by title, illustrator, pagination, imprint, date of publication, and abstract. An index provides access to all names of individuals with a creative responsibility for each work listed, to the title of each work, and to any awards which the work may have received. (Author/JPF)

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NOTABLE CANADIAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS - 1975 SUPPLEMENT

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FOREWORD

The English committee read and evaluated eighty-five children's books and chose ten of them for the 1975 list of notable English-Canadian children's books. Generally speaking, we asked ourselves if the book was a good experience for the child aged 0 to 14 years. All forms of fiction and non-fiction were considered, except textbooks and reference books such as dictionaries. Our selection criteria included evaluation of the theme, setting, plot, characters, style, illustrations and factual information. Format and binding were also considered. No book, however, was rejected solely for poor binding.

Irene E. Aubrey

1975:1 BEAUDRY, Lindsay. Kawin. Illustrated by the author. s.l., Ahbenoojeyug, 1975. 68 p.; Don Mills, Ont., Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1977. 64 p.

This attractive paperback of native Indian crafts was prepared in conjunction with Ahbenoojeyug Incorporated, a comprehensive program for North American Indian children living in Toronto. As well as black and white drawings and brief notes which give step-by-step instructions on how to do the thirty-five crafts, there is brief background information on each. It will be difficult for children to do some of the crafts independently, such as tanning hides, but they will still enjoy reading about them. The book can be found and will appeal to middle and older readers. The 1975 edition is now out-of-print.

In 1977 a new edition was published by Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited. While the same information has been retained, the format has been changed. The paperback is larger, questions and project suggestions have been added, orange has been used for some of the illustrations, and metric measurements are given instead of imperial. This edition is more colourful but less attractive than the original, and is more suited to classroom use than general interest. The royalties from its sale go to Ahbenoojeyug Incorporated.

1975:2 DEWDNEY, Selwyn. They Shared to Survive: The Native Peoples of Canada. Illustrated by Franklin Arbuckle. Toronto, Macmillan of Canada, 1975. 210 p. maps.

This concise and informative text provides insight into the history of the native cultures of Canada. The author speaks knowledgeably and with feeling. His factual descriptions are sometimes interspersed with fictional accounts - a method which, in this case, heightens the interest in the subject. The illustrations by Franklin Arbuckle are in black and white and beautifully depict some of the lifestyles of the Amerindians. One only wishes that there were more illustrations. A beautiful book for older readers.

1975:3 FREEMAN, Bill. Shantymen of Cache Lake. Toronto, J. Lorimer, 1975. 166 p. ill., map.

In 1873, the Percy Lumber Company tried unsuccessfully to unionize their Cache Lake camp in the Upper Ottawa Valley. This political event is described, in novel form, by the author. The main heroes are Meg and John McBain, teen-aged children of Angus McBain, the union organizer who has recently died. They take work in the lumber camp and attempt to solve what may have been their father's murder. The story is interesting, although its treatment is too one-sided, in favour of the unionists; the writing style is adequate. It is a noteworthy contribution to the realm of Canadian children's literature because it portrays a subject of a political nature. Shantymen of Cache Lake was awarded the 1975 Canada Council Children's Literature Prize.

1975:4 HARRIS, Christie. Sky Man on the Totem Pole? Illustrated by Douglas Tait. Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1975. 167 p.

Published in the US by: New York, Atheneum, 1975. 167 p.

The author has written a space-age version of the Temlaham legend in which the man-from-the-sky comes to earth and carries off an Indian maiden who returns years later with six children and a box "full of mysterious power". In this version, the man-from-the-sky is a traveller from the planet Tlu: the idea of communication between plants and men is developed; and the great inner strength of the Northwest Indian, past and present, is conveyed. Douglas Tait has drawn, in black and white, some beautiful pictures which enhance the text. The novel, which is complex and not easily read, is suitable for older readers.

1975:5 KURELEK, William. A Prairie Boy's Summer. Illustrated by the author. Montreal, Tundra Books, 1975. 48 p.

Published in the US by: Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1975. 48 p.

This companion volume to the award-winning A Prairie Boy's Winter is an equally beautiful book. School ends and summer

holidays begin, but for William it is not a time of rest and play. He must help with the multitude of farm chores like haying, plowing, and milking the cows. Sometimes, though, there is time for fun, like taking a skinny-dip in the swimming hole. The marvelous glowing paintings depicting William's summer are full of life and, at times, humour. The story flows well and complements the pictures. A beautiful, warm, human book for middle and older readers and adults. A Prairie Boy's Summer was awarded the 1976 Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award for the best illustrated children's book and the 1976 Toronto Chapter of the IODE Award for the best children's book.

1975:6 RICHLER, Mordecai. Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang. Illustrated by Fritz Wegner. Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1975. 83 p.

Published in the US by: New York, A. A. Knopf, 1975. 83 p.; New York, Bantam Books, 1977, 1975. 87 p.

Mordecai Richler has written a delightful, humourous fantasy for young children. The hero of the story is Jacob Two-Two who, because of his frustrations, says everything twice. When a storekeeper accuses him of rudeness, Jacob Two-Two runs away to a park where he falls asleep and dreams. In the midst of the make-believe adventures that follow, not the least of which are his encounters with the warden "the hooded fang", Jacob Two-Two learns to handle his problem. The black and white pictures by the British artist Fritz Wegner are imaginative and beautifully complement the story. Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang won the 1976 Book of the Year for Children Award and the 1976 Ruth Schwartz Children's Book Award.

1975:7 ROBINS, Patricia. Star Maiden: An Ojibwa Legend of the First Water Lily. Illustrated by Shirley Day. Don Mills, Ont., Collier Macmillan Canada, 1975. 32 p.

A beautiful star maiden wishes to live forever among the Indian people she has grown to love. To do so, she must find an earthly resting place. She searches with great care and finally chooses to live in the lake as a beautiful white star flower or

water lily. The story is told simply and poetically. The illustrations, in watercolours in earth tones of green, rust, and brown, are nicely integrated with the text. Altogether the book is a fine example of quality book production. Recipient of the first Collier Macmillan Prize for Juvenile Literature, it is a picture book to be enjoyed again and again by young children.

1975:8 ROBINSON, Gail and Douglas HILL. Coyote the Trickster: Legends of the North American Indians. Illustrated by Graham McCallum. London, Chatto & Windus, 1975. 124 p.

The authors retell twelve North American Indian legends of Coyote and Raven as trickster heroes - supernatural beings capable of assuming either an animal or human form. These heroes could in turn, be wily, mischievous, brave and kind. The myths retold in this particular collection relate to the following tribes: Ute, Navaho, Haida, Southern Plains, Central Plains, Pacific North West, Chinook, Crow, Eskimo, Yorok, North Pacific Coast and Yakima. The stories are well-written, lively and easily read. The British artist, Graham McCallum, drew the pictures. The authors have recently returned from England to live in Canada.

1975:9 SURCOUF, Lorraine. Growing a Green Thumb: Home Gardening for Children. Toronto, Greey de Pencier Publications, 1975. 80 p.

Growing a Green Thumb is an attractive book that serves as an introduction to indoor and outdoor organic gardening for middle and older readers. In some instances, children will need the assistance of adults to work on some of the projects, for example, "to remove sod and dig the topsoil". The instructions are concise and are matched with clear diagrams and colourful drawings. Some of the projects include planters, potatoes, corn, marigolds, narcissi and tomatoes. The author also provides additional information on interesting activities such as "things to make with pumpkins, making a corn doll, and potato prints". There is no index.

1975:10 TOLMIE, Ken. A Tale of an Egg. Illustrated by the author. Ottawa, Oberon Press, 1975. 54 p.

A Tale of an Egg is a delightful story, full of suspense and the kind of repetitive sentences that young children enjoy. An egg, in order to escape his fate in an eggcup, goes in search of another identity. He asks everyone and everything he meets "Can I be like you, sir?". They all refuse, except the fox who arranges for the egg to be like Humpty-Dumpty. The end of the story, however, is a nice surprise. Ken Tolmie is an artist who has held exhibitions of his paintings in various galleries. The pictures for his first children's book are done in black and white in pen and ink. They are uncluttered and humourous and perfectly match the story. A Tale of an Egg is excellent for telling or reading aloud.

NOTABLE CANADIAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

1975 SUPPLEMENT

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The following index provides access to all names of individuals with a creative responsibility for each work listed in Notable Canadian Children's Books: 1975 Supplement (e.g., author, illustrator, etc.), to the title of each work and to any awards which the work may have received. The date of presentation for an award, if different from the year in which the work was published, is given in parentheses following the title of the work.

abbreviations: ill. - illustrator

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